CLAIM AMENDMENTS

What I claim is:

1. (original) A method for hydraulic fracturing of a formation around a wellbore, the wellbore having a volume, comprising:

(a) placing a volume of cross-linked fracturing fluid in the wellbore, the volume of the cross-linked fracturing fluid being less than the volume of the wellbore;

(b) displacing the cross-linked fracturing fluid down to a perforation in the casing by a displacement fluid; and

(c) applying pressure to the displacement fluid by pumping so as to inject the cross-linked fracturing fluid through the perforation into the formation to form a hydraulic fracture.

2. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the cross-linked fracturing fluid has a viscosity greater than about 500 cP at a temperature of injection into the formation.

3. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the cross-linked fracturing fluid has a viscosity greater than about 2,000 cP at a temperature of injection into the formation.

4. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the cross-linked fracturing fluid has a viscosity greater than about 10,000 cP at a temperature of injection into the formation.

5. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein step (a) is performed by placing the cross-linked fracturing fluid in the wellbore in the form of discrete volumes of fluid in a carrier fluid.

6. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein step (a) is performed by placing the cross-linked fracturing fluid into a stream having a carrier fluid at a concentration such that the cross-linked fracturing fluid flows on a film of carrier fluid.

7. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein step (a) is performed by placing the cross-linked fracturing fluid in the wellbore and allowing the fluid to fall by gravity down the wellbore.

8. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein at least a portion of the cross-linked fracturing fluid contains a proppant.

9. (original) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step after step (b) of allowing a time for the cross-linked polymer to decrease in viscosity.

10. (original) The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of forming a hydraulic fracture in the formation around the wellbore and then performing steps (a) and (b) and injecting the cross-linked fracturing fluid into the hydraulic fracture before closure of the hydraulic fracture.

11. (original) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of forming a hydraulic fracture in the formation around the wellbore and then performing steps (a) and (b) and injecting the cross-linked fracturing fluid into the hydraulic fracture after closure of the hydraulic fracture.

12. (original) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of performing another operation in the wellbore after step (c) and before a time for the cross-linked fracturing fluid to degrade.

13. (original) The method of claim 12 wherein the other operation in the wellbore is gravel packing.

14. (cancelled) The method of claim 1 wherein a portion of the cross-linked fracturing fluid contains a proppant.

15. (original) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step for transporting ball sealers down the wellbore along with or following the cross-linked fracturing fluid.

16. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the cross-linked fracturing fluid comprises a water-soluble polymer.

17. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the cross-linked fracturing fluid is selected to exhibit syneresis.

18. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the cross-linking of the cross-linked fracturing fluid is delayed after a cross-linking material is added to the fluid.

19. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein a surfactant or polymer is added to the cross-linked fracturing fluid to promote wall slip during flow of the cross-linked fracturing fluid.

20. (original) The method of claim 6 wherein a surfactant or polymer is added to the carrier fluid to promote wall slip during flow of the cross-linked fracturing fluid.

21. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the cross-linked fracturing fluid is displaced from the wellbore by a fluid having a lower specific gravity than the specific gravity of the cross-linked fracturing fluid.

22. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the cross-linked fracturing fluid occupies about 200 feet or less in the casing above the perforation.

23. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the volume of the cross-linked fracturing fluid is less than about 50 ft^3.

24. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the volume of the cross-linked fracturing fluid is less than about 250 ft^3.